

AN HISTORICAL SKETCH  
OF THE  
ISLE OF ORLEANS,

BEING

A Paper read before the Literary and  
Historical Society of Quebec, on Wednes-  
day Evening, the 4th of April, 1860 ;

BY

N. H. BOWEN,

AN ASSOCIATE MEMBER.

QUEBEC :

PRINTED AT THE "MERCURY" NEWSPAPER OFFICE.

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Of the many Islands which divide the waters of the broad Saint Lawrence, there is none which more deservedly claims attention than the Isle of Orleans, not only for the beauty of its scenery, but for the salubrity of the climate and the fertility of its soil.

But apart from these natural advantages, the Island is not wanting in Historical Recollections, and it is chiefly on this account that I have selected it as the subject of this Evening's Paper.

Within but four miles from the Citadel of Quebec, and forming not the least attractive spot in the Harbour, is the South-West End of the Isle of Orleans, with its green banks sloping down to the very water's edge, relieved by a cluster of white cottages at the extreme point, and a grove of pine trees on the crest of the Hill, called the "Crow's Nest."

Owing to its great fertility, the Isle of Orleans was one of the first places cleared and settled by the French, on their arrival in Canada, and most of the lands have been conceded for upwards of two centuries. The Island now consists of the five parishes,



of Saint Pierre, Sainte Famille, Saint François, Saint Jean and Saint Laurent, containing an aggregate population of over 6000 souls.

Isolated from the mainland and, until lately, possessing but very imperfect communication with the City during the summer months, the Inhabitants of this place (all of French extraction) have preserved the manners and customs of their forefathers more closely than their countrymen on the main-land, and are less contaminated by the fashions and follies of the Town. Owing to the same cause, the Islanders have intermarried chiefly between themselves and in a great majority of cases, the lands are still owned by the direct descendants, bearing the names of the original Grantees.

The first historical mention of this Island, is in Jacques Cartier's second voyage to America, when ascending the Saint Lawrence for the first time, he cast Anchor with his Ships, "*La Grande Hermine*," "*La Petite Hermine*" and "*L'Emerillon*," off Château Richer, between the Great Island (as he called it) and *la terre du Nord*, where he found people living and chiefly occupied in fishing.

Here he went ashore, taking with him as Interpreters, "Taiguraguy" and "Domagaya," the two Gaspé Indians who had accompanied him to Europe in his former voyage : with their assistance, the natives were easily conciliated, received the strangers with



every demonstration of joy, and gave them presents of Fish, Millet, (*mil*) and Melons. Next day, Don-nacona, the Chief of the Canadian Indians, (*Seigneur du Canada*, as he is styled in the narrative,) visited Cartier with twelve boats, full of the Natives, and finding from the mouth of the two Indians, how well they had been treated in Europe, he also exhibited much joy, and kissed Cartier's arms as a mark of gratitude. Cartier afterwards visited the Island, to see the nature of the soil and to examine the Trees, which he says, appeared very beautiful : he found them to consist of Oak, Elm, Pine, Cedar and other woods, known in France, and likewise found an immense number of vines, which he had not yet met with in the Country, and for that reason he named it Bacchus Isle, *L'Isle de Bacchus*. In the Spring, however, of 1536, as he returned to France, he anchored, he says, at the foot of the "Isle of Orleans," having in the meantime changed its name, in honor of one of the Royal Family, of France : this reason is not given in Cartier's account of his travels, but in Thevet's "*Cosmographie Universelle*," published in 1575, Book 23, Page 1011. Thevet, who was a personal friend of Cartier's, a great traveller, and had visited nearly every part of the then known world, writes "As to the great River of Hochelaga, it contains many beautiful Islands, such as L'Aisple, "(Anticosti ?) which is quite at its mouth, and Or-

“leans, so called in honor and remembrance of the “late Duke of Orleans” : These Islands might be easily fortified, peopled and cultivated. Our men lived there exceedingly well, as the natives brought them more fish than they desired, and furnished them also with abundance of game, which they are very skilful in taking, shooting with bows and arrows, and trapping the animals in many ingenious ways, (*avec mille ruses gentilles.*)

This Island, which is nearly 21 miles long, and in some places  $5\frac{1}{2}$  miles broad, was granted originally as a Seigniory, forming part of the Seigniory of Beapré, by the Company of New France to the Sieur Castillon, of Paris, on the 15th January, 1636.

One of the conditions of the Grant, was that the said Sieur Castillon was to send out colonists to settle on the Island, and all men so sent out were to be reckoned as so many, on account of those which the said Company of New France otherwise called the Company of the 100 Associates, had agreed by their Charter to send to the Colony.

The lands in this Seigniory were soon occupied : in the year 1663 one of the Jesuit Fathers writes, “The Isle of Orleans is remarkable for its size, being “upwards of 15 leagues in circumference. It abounds “in grain, which grows there of every description “and with such facility, that the farmer has only to “scrape the land which yields him all that he can de-

“sire : and this, during 14 or 15 consecutive years  
 “without any repose. This beautiful Island continues  
 “happily to be peopled from one end to the other.”

Between the years 1662 and 1668, the Seigniorship of Beaupré passed into the hands of Monseigneur de Laval de Montmorency, first Roman Catholic Bishop of Quebec, who purchased and made a *free gift* of it to the Seminary of Quebec.

Monseigneur de Laval, on behalf of the said Seminary, (of which he was the Founder,) subsequently exchanged the Isle d'Orleans with Mtre. François de Berthelot, *Conseiller au Parlement de Paris*, for L'Isle Jesus, near Montreal, by deed before Dupare and Carnot, at Paris, on the 24th April, 1675.

From this date the Island formed a distinct Seigniorship, having its *Arrière-Fiefs*, and was even erected into a *Fief Noble*, under the name of the Comté de Saint Laurent, (Vide Histoire de la N. France par le P. de Charlevoix, 3 Vol : page 67.)

On the 25th of February, 1702, Mtre. François de Berthelot sold the Seigniorship to Dame Charlotte François Juchereau, (of the ancient family of Juchereau du Chesnay,)\* *Epouse non commune* de François de la Forêt, Ecuier.

On the 7th December, 1705, the Isle and Comté St. Laurent, was sold in execution at the suit of M.

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\* Edits. and Ord. : Vol. 2, pages 24 and 139.

de Berthelot *vs.* Mdme. de la Forêt, styled *Comtesse de St. Laurent*, and repurchased by M. de Berthelot.

From M. François de Berthelot, the Seigniory passed to the Gaillard Family, who transferred one half of it to the family Durocher allied to the Mauvides, and on the 24th May, 1800, the heirs Durocher and Mauvide, sold the said Seigniory, (with the exception of a portion at the North-East end, owned by Mr. Poulin,) to the late Joseph Drapeau, Esq., in whose family it remains to the present day.

In this Seigniory are several Fiefs or Sub-Seigniories, (*arrières Fiefs*), paying tribute to the Seignior *primitif* ; namely, the Fiefs Beaulieu, la Grosardière, de la Chevalerie, de la Tesserie, d'Argentenay and Menu.

Having thus traced the title of the Seigniory from its original concession to our own days, I purpose to start from the South-Western extremity of the Island, opposite Quebec, and following the road by which it is encompassed, to point out some of the objects of interest with which it abounds.

The group of houses at the South-West end of the Island, is situated within the Fief Beaulieu in the Parish of Saint Pierre.

This Fief was originally granted to Sieur Jacques Gourdeau de Beaulieu on the 1st March, 1652,\* and

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\* E. and Ord. : Vol. 2, page 535.



consisted of 40 arpents in width, traversing the Island. This gentleman, who married Eleanore de Grand-maison widow by her first marriage of M. François de Chavigny de Berchereau, lived in a long low stone house to the left, on the first plateau of land ; he was cruelly murdered by one of his valets and his house burnt to cover the crime in the month of May 1663 : \* this valet having been tried and convicted, was first publicly whipped, and then shot on the 8th of June of the same year. The solid stone walls of the house having been but little damaged by the fire, the house was soon rebuilt, and exists to the present day, occupied by M. François Gourdeau, a direct descendant of the original owner, and father of François Gourdeau, the respected Superintendent of Pilots for and below the Port and Harbor of Quebec. It may be here interesting to note that Eleanore de Grand-maison who married, 1st, François de Chavigny de Buchereau, 2nd, Jacques Gourdeau de Beaulieu, and 3rd, Jacques Cailhaut. Sieur de la Tesserie, is one of the ancestors of the distinguished Canadian families of La Gorgendiere, Rigaud de Vaudreuil and Taschereau : She died in 1692, at the age of 70 years, leaving behind her a numerous progeny.

This part of the island possesses no little interest, as having been the basis of Wolfe's operations at the capture of Quebec, in 1759 : the troops having disembarked at St. Laurent, were marched up to this

Vide. — " Notes sur les registres de Notre Dame de Quebec, page 36. "

point and placed under canvas, and sundry redoubts were constructed as shown in the chart accompanying Hawkins' Picture of Quebec.

From this spot, Wolfe (fresh from his victory at Louisbourg, Capé Breton,) first looked upon the Harbour of Quebec and that frowning Citadel, the Gibraltar of America, which he was ordered to besiege. Warburton has drawn such an interesting picture of this incident, that I must be allowed to quote it entire :

“ Accompanied by the Chief Engineer, Major  
“ McKellar, and an escort of Light Infantry, Wolfe,  
“ as soon as he landed, pushed on to the extremity of  
“ the island nearest to Quebec. A magnificent but  
“ disheartening scene lay before him : On the sum-  
“ mit of the highest eminence over the strait, in  
“ the Great River, from whence the basin before him  
“ opened, the French flag waved. The crest of the  
“ rocky height was crowned with formidable works,  
“ redoubted and flanked. On every favourable spot  
“ above, below, or on the rugged ascent, were bat-  
“ teries bristling with guns. This stronghold formed  
“ the right flank of a position, eight miles in extent,  
“ the falls and the deep and rapid stream of the Mont-  
“ morency was the left : the shoals and rocks of the  
“ Saint Lawrence protected the broad front, and the  
“ rich valley of the Saint Charles, with the prosper-  
“ ous and beautiful villages of Charlesbourg and Lake

“ Beauport, gave shelter and hospitality in the rear.  
“ A crested bank of some height over the Grand  
“ River, marked the main line of defences from east  
“ to west ; parapets flanked at every favorable spot,  
“ aided their natural strength. Crowding on this em-  
“ battled bank, swarming in the irregular village  
“ streets, and formed in masses on the hills beyond,  
“ were 12,000 French and Canadian troops, led by  
“ the gallant Montcalm. While Wolfe still gazed upon  
“ this appalling prospect, a storm gathered over his  
“ head, and burst in sudden violence. The teeming  
“ rain fell like a veil between him and the beautiful  
“ but dangerous shore. Lightning hissed through the  
“ air, and a hurricane swept over the river with de-  
“ structive strength. Transports were driven from  
“ their moorings and cast ashore, smaller boats were  
“ dashed against each other and swamped, and the  
“ vessels of war with difficulty held to their anchors.  
“ Silently and thoughtfully the young General re-  
“ traced his steps to the landing place, his sanguine  
“ and sensitive spirit oppressed for a moment with  
“ the difficulties of his enterprise, and by the gloomy  
“ omen of the heavens. But before he rejoined the  
“ army, the weight was flung aside, the elastic spring  
“ of his mind had resumed its play, and he entered  
“ the camp with head erect and his usual bright and  
“ fearless aspect. He did not forget that he received  
“ his high command in the confidence that no



“ ‘dangers or difficulties’ should discourage him.”

From hence was projected the first attempt in July, 1759, to storm the Beauport Heights, near Montmorency, which proved so disastrous to our troops. A century later, (September 1858,) the scarlet coats of Her Majesty's troops were again seen on the same Plâteau. But this time they came in peace. The practice of the Enfield rifle, requiring a longer range than could with safety be found on the main land, the military authorities selected the beach on the north of the island as being admirably adapted for a rifle range. A field on the top of the hill has been leased as a camping ground for the men, and their spotless white tents lend a new charm to the picture.

For the first mile, the road gradually ascends by a series of ridges and table land till you attain an elevation of 200 feet above the Saint Lawrence. Here the view is very enchanting ; directly opposite, the waters of the Montmorency, rush to embrace their elder sister over a precipice, 250 feet in height : the ear is charmed with the sound of the fall, mellowed by the distance of half a league : like volumes of smoke the spray ascends on either side, the creamy whiteness of the fall itself is reflected on the surface of the Saint Lawrence, and the effect of the whole is greatly heightened by a back ground of blue mountains, (*les Côtes de Beaupré*,) and the well cultivated lands of Beauport and Ange-Gardien.

The Parish of St. Pierre and St Paul, so styled in the regulation of Sept. 20, 1721, confirmed by an order in council of March 3, 1722, is two and a half leagues front along the North Channel, from the south west extremity aforesaid to the River *Pot du Beurre* ; about four and a half miles from the point is the Parish Church, situated on the most elevated part of the Island and commanding an extensive and enchanting view. Indeed all along this road the views are beautiful : the dwellings of the farmers with their little gardens and orchards look neat and comfortable ; now and then as one drives along a grove of maples, an orchard or a building hides the view of the river, and again the noble Lawrentian mountains and the pretty villages of the opposite bank burst on the sight with renewed freshness.

A little beyond the Church of St. Pierre is a by-road, called the *Route des Prêtres*, leading at right angles across the Island to the Parish of Saint Laurent. Most of this road is through a grove of maples whose boughs in many places meet over-head like the green lanes of Old England, so justly celebrated in prose and verse. Midway between Saint Pierre and St. Laurent on this by-road is seen a large black cross : as this is of common occurrence in the French Country, especially at a distance from any Church, one would not deem it worthy of particular notice, but there is a tale attached to this pious symbol which

renders it an object of some interest. Towards the close of the seventeenth century, Monseigneur de St. Vallier, presented a sacred relic, consisting of a small piece of the arm-bone of Saint Paul the Apostle, in a handsome silver chalice, to the church of Saint Paul in the Isle of Orleans. At that time the Parish of Saint Laurent was called the Parish of Saint Paul. Some years afterwards this Parish having taken Saint Laurent as its patron, and transferred its title of St. Paul to the Parish of St. Pierre, M. Dauric, first Curé of the Parish of St. Pierre and St. Paul, demanded the relic of St. Paul from M. Poncelet, Curé de St. Laurent, and offered in exchange three bones of Saint Clement the Martyr. M. de la Colombière, Grand Archdeacon and Vicar General of M. de St. Vallier, in his pastoral visit to the Parish of St. Laurent, on the 3rd July, 1702, approved of and ordered this exchange, which was accordingly made on the 24th of the same month. The relic of St. Paul was accordingly deposited for safe keeping in the church of St. Pierre, where it was an object of much interest and religious veneration. This proceeding was very distasteful to the good people of Saint Laurent, who considered the relic as their lawful property. However, M. de St. Vallier, in a letter written from Paris to M. Dauric, on the 17th May, 1703, ratified this exchange, saying: "I am very glad that you have effected the exchange of relics with M. Poncelet."



Some years afterwards an inhabitant of St. Laurent brought back the relic of St. Clement to the Parish of St. Pierre, exchanged it furtively for the relic of St. Paul, and carried back the latter to the Church of St. Laurent. Hereupon, a deadly feud arose between the two parishes; the matter was at length referred to the Roman Catholic Prelate of Quebec, and after a careful investigation he decreed that the relics should be returned to their respective parishes. To effect this he ordered that on a certain day the people of both parishes should proceed half way up the *Route des Prêtres*, to the centre of the Island, in solemn procession, carrying the sacred relics, and there effect the exchange, returning with like pomp and ceremony back to their respective Churches. This order was literally carried out, and the large black cross in question marks the spot where the two parishes met on that interesting occasion.

Pursuing the road from St. Fierre, we enter the parish of Saint Famille, at the River *Pot-du-Beurre*; this parish extends  $2\frac{1}{2}$  leagues along the North Channel, eastward from the said River; at this stream there is a large flour mill, owned by M. Boissonnault, and also a small saw-mill, which is worked in the spring and autumn.

The Parish of Ste. Famille is one of the most populous on the Island, and its inhabitants are generally wealthy and prosperous farmers. The beach front-

ing a part of this parish, and known as "the Ste. Famille swamp," is a great resort for wild fowl, and is esteemed one of the best shooting grounds in the neighborhood of Quebec. Snipe, golden plover and ducks are plentiful in their season, but there are generally so many men on the swamp shooting for market that an amateur can seldom count upon a good day's sport. The blue Orleans plum originally imported from France, grows here and indeed all over the Island in great perfection, and with little or no cultivation : this fruit, of which immense quantities are brought to Quebec, every autumn, and the valuable fisheries fronting their lands have aided materially in increasing the wealth of the inhabitants.

Near to the Church of Ste. Famille is a Convent of Nuns belonging to the Order of "*la Congrégation de Notre Dame*," who have an Academy where upwards of 50 girls receive annually a good education. This Convent was established by the Sœur Marguerite Bourgeoys, foundress of the Congregation Notre Dame de Villemarie, in 1685, and is consequently one of the oldest religious institutions in the country. The first ladies who undertook this Mission were the Sœurs Anne Hioux, and Marie Barbier, whose privations and sufferings at the outset were very great. On their arrival at Orleans in the early part of November, the weather was very severe ; they were but poorly clad and felt the cold keenly. As there was

no house prepared for them, they were obliged at first to board with a widow woman and to take their meals with the servants and children living in the same house, so that privacy was almost out of the question. The Church was nearly half a mile distant from the house, and often as they returned from it wet and covered with snow, they dared not approach the fire, by reason of the people who surrounded it. But the coldness of the weather was not greater than the coldness and indifference of the people amounting almost to rudeness. Let one short anecdote from the life of the Sœur Marie Barbier suffice : “ One day as we returned from  
“ Mass, there was a violent North-wind accompanied  
“ with a great snow-drift which prevented us from  
“ seeing where we went, and I fell into a deep ditch  
“ full of snow. My companion was far ahead of me  
“ and I was exhausted : I could not drag myself out  
“ of the ditch having lost all my strength, and the  
“ snow was covering me more and more. Then I  
“ prayed to the holy child Jesus to assist me, if he  
“ wished to prolong my life for his glory, and to afford  
“ me time to do penitence. I was quite buried in the  
“ snow, and there appeared nothing but the top of  
“ my hood (*coiffe*.) Its black color made some  
“ people of the neighborhood believe that it was one  
“ of their cattle which had fallen into the ditch.  
“ They ran there quickly, and having drawn me out

“ with difficulty left me on the side of the ditch  
 “ whence I had much difficulty in reaching the house.  
 “ That joined to the great cold and all the inconven-  
 “ niences that I felt during the winter in this abode,  
 “ made me contract very serious infirmities. Pro-  
 “ vided however that God receives glory from them  
 “ and that my pride is crushed, I am satisfied ;  
 “ The mercies of God towards me are very great :—  
 “ ever since that time it has only been grace upon  
 “ grace : may he be eternally blessed.”

But the good Sisters had far more to contend with  
 than their private sufferings and discomfort : they found  
 the Islanders licentious beyond measure and exceed-  
 ingly unwilling to listen to their doctrines ; by degrees  
 however they overcame all difficulties, established a  
 School and effected a wonderful change in the minds  
 and morals of the people, which was not confined to  
 the Parish of Ste. Famille alone, but gradually extend-  
 ed around the whole Island. In the autumn of 1692,  
 M. Lamy, Curé of Ste. Famille, at whose seurgent re-  
 quest the Mission was first established, gave them with  
 noble generosity, a Farm of 4 arpents in front, running  
 back to the centre of the Island, and which has been  
 their chief means of support ever since. Some years  
 later, M. Lamy, at his own expense, built them  
 a substantial stone house and dependencies, and made  
 a garden also, and in order to do so, expended all his  
 private means and even ran himself into debt. The



Nuns also received valuable assistance from the Seignior, M. François de Berthelot, and from a private gentleman of Quebec, M. Toussaint Le Franc, who made them a gift of 3000 livres, to enable them to take and instruct one poor girl each year and to employ the rest for their household wants (*ménage*). A more detailed account of this institution will be found in the life of Soeur Marguerite Bourgeoys, published at Villemarie, in 1853.

Continuing onwards, we come to the Parish of St. François de Salles, commonly called St. François, situated in the Fief Argentenaye : it is three leagues in extent, half on the north and half on the south-channel, comprising the north-east end of the Island. From this point there is a charming prospect down the River which is here not less than 15 miles broad : to the right may be seen Isle Madame, *Isle-aux-Reaux*, a beautiful and highly cultivated Island belonging to G. M. Douglas, Esquire, Grosse-Isle owned by the Government and used as a Quarantine Station, and a group of smaller Islands, and on the left the lofty promontory of Cap Tourment rises almost perpendicularly from the River to a height of 1892 feet.

About four miles from the north east point on the south side of the Island, begins the Parish of St. Jean Baptiste, commonly called Saint Jean, which consists of two and a half leagues along the south channel, from the house of André Terrien to the River Maheux.

In this Parish the highway runs almost exclusively along the Beach, and most of the houses are built on the top of the bank, surrounded by fine old Maples and Elms, intermingled with the poplar of Lombardy. Each Farmer has his own private road winding up the Cape, giving to his property an air of finish and taste, which one scarcely expects to find among the peasantry. Many of the best houses have a flag staff in the vicinity denoting the owners to be Captains of Militia or Pilots. From the early settlement of the country, the Isle of Orleans has furnished a large proportion of the Pilots employed in navigating Vessels in and below the Harbor of Quebec, and a more intelligent and hardy set of men are nowhere to be found. Here on the banks of the Maheux river may still be seen the house of M. de Lauzon, Seigniorial Judge (*Bailli*) of Orleans and son of one of the Governors of Canada under the French dominion, who was massacred by the Iroquois in 1661. This young man desiring to free the country from a band of Indians who were committing every kind of depredation, embarked in a boat with only eight companions and made a descent on a house situated near the middle of the Island, where the Iroquois were in ambush. Near this house on the bank of the river was a huge rock, which would serve as a rampart to any one in possession of it : the Indians perceiving the approach of de Lauzon's party and the great advantage of this rock,

seized pieces of wood which they held before them as a shield against the French bullets, and with a desperate rush succeeded in gaining possession of this advantageous position. From thence they commanded the boat which had unfortunately grounded on the beach opposite, leaving the attackers without a particle of shelter.

In this position what could nine men do against forty Indians, well armed and covered by the rock as securely as if behind entrenchments. So sure were the Indians of their prey, that they summoned young Lauzon to surrender, but he replied by discharging his gun at the enemy, preferring a glorious death to shameful bondage. As he was foremost in attack, so was he the first killed, and the rest of his brave companions shared the same fate.

Within the last two years a large and commodious wharf has been constructed here through the enterprise of Nazaire Larue, Esq., N. P., and a few other gentlemen, thus affording a safe and convenient landing place at all seasons. Since the construction of this wharf, the steamers running to Berthier and the Lower Parishes call at St. Jean in passing to and fro, affording great facilities to the *habitans* for getting their produce to market.

Leaving St. Jean we come to the Parish of St. Laurent, formerly called the Parish of St. Paul. It is so styled in the ancient chart of Orleans, made and

very exactly measured in the year 1689, by the *Sieur de Villeneuve, Ingénieur du Roy*. A copy of this chart was lent me by the Reverend Abbé Ferland, of Quebec, a gentleman highly distinguished by his researches in Canadian history, to whose kindness and attention I am indebted for much of the information contained in this paper. It is a curious old map, showing not only every road and stream on the island, but also the position of every house and barn, and the name of every family residing there at the time. The parish of St. Laurent consists of two and a half leagues in front along the south channel from the river Maheux to the house of Pierre Gosselin. An extensive business in boat building is carried on at this place, where most of the boats required by vessels built at the Port of Quebec are manufactured.

In this Parish is the celebrated Cove and Bay, known as "St. Patrick's Hole," where ships and vessels find complete shelter from all gales, and where formerly outward bound vessels used to come to anchor and await their final sailing orders. I cannot precisely discover why it was so named ; mayhap some navigator from the Emerald Isle, driven up the river by a furious easterly gale, found behind the point St. Laurent a safe and unexpected shelter, and in gratitude for his escape from a watery grave, called the cove after his Patron Saint.

There was at one time an extensive shipyard at this



place, but it has been abandoned as such for upwards of thirty years past.

Subsequently the widow "Cookson" kept an hotel on the east side of the cove ; a few years ago it was a favorite resort for summer picnics : now the roofless tenement is crumbling to pieces, and the wild raspberry bushes and young maples dispute the ground on which it stands. This cove is the property of Messrs. Gillespie, Dean & Co., merchants, of this city.

It was near the Church of St. Laurent that Wolfe landed, on the 27th June, 1759, and found a placard on the sacred edifice, addressed to "the worthy officers of the British Army," requesting them to respect the building ; it is hardly necessary to add that the request was cheerfully complied with.

A new and stately stone Church is about to replace the small but time-honored edifice that has served as a place of worship for the last two centuries.

A few miles west of the Church is the farm of François Maranda, on the front of which, near the water side, is a small Cave, called the "*Caverne de Bontemps*," which appears to have been formed by the upheaving of the rocks through volcanic action. Report says that it owes its name to one Bontemps, a fugitive from justice, who lived in it during an entire winter, and thus escaped detection To reach it one descends a steep bank, passing through a grove of fine old maples, which would do honor to

a nobleman's park, and are in themselves quite worthy of a visit. At Maranda's, the high road, instead of continuing along the south side of the Island, crosses over to the north, and so brings one back to the south western extremity.

About a quarter of a mile from this point on the south channel, is the wharf and inn, erected in 1855, on establishing a Steam Ferry for the first time between the Island and the city ; several new buildings have also been lately constructed there, and in the course of a few years it is probable that a considerable village will arise around this spot. To the east, and almost adjoining the ferry landing, is the property known as "*La Terre du Fort.*"

This Property possesses much interest to the Canadian historian, as having been the home of the Huron Indians for several years, at a time when they were sorely oppressed and hunted down by the fierce and cruel Iroquois.

In the year 1650, the Huron nation, worn out by a long and hopeless struggle, sought for safety in complete dispersion.

Dividing themselves into five principal bands, the first retired to the Islands in the northern part of Lake Huron, especially to the large Island known as Manitoulin ; the second joined the Iroquois ; the third division occupied the Island of Michillimakenac, the fourth demanded protection from the nation called

“*Errieronnons*” or *du Chat* ; and the fifth division retired to the French colony of Quebec, some in 1650 with their missionaries and others a year or two afterwards.

It is of this fifth and only surviving band of a once large and powerful nation that I have now to speak.

There being no place to offer them in the town of Quebec, and the outskirts of the fort being insecure, a lot of ground was purchased for them on the Isle of Orleans, from Mademoiselle Eleanore de Grand-maison, and here in the same year 1650 the father Jesuits built in the neighborhood of the Indian Wigwams, a house of prayer, a modest habitation for the Missionaries, and a fort *en pieux similar to that of the Island of St. Joseph*, now called Charity or Christian Island, seven leagues from Penetanguishene, in Lake Huron.

The precise spot where this fort was constructed was only recently discovered by the writer. There existed no doubt that the land called in the old titles “*La Terre du Fort*,” was the same as that purchased for the Indian’s asylum, from Mlle. de Grand-maison. Its position is exactly shown on the chart of the Isle and Comté de St. Laurent to which I have before had occasion to allude.

Had the fort in question been simply constructed of wood, all vestiges of it would long since have dis-



appeared, but authorities agree that it was constructed *exactly similar* to the fort St. Joseph.

Now the fort St. Joseph consisted of a stone wall, twelve feet high and flanked with four bastions, whose ruins are still extant\* :—" See Martin's life of the Père Bressany, page 38." The fort at Orleans being *exactly similar*, must therefore have had its foundation in stone and capped with pickets *pieux*.

That this was the fact there can be now no doubt.

In excavating in 1856, to construct an " ice house" on the eminence near the writer's cottage at *Anse du Fort*, the workmen cut through a solid stone wall five feet in thickness, to which they drew my attention : there was an accumulation of about a foot of soil over the masonry, and thorns and young maples grew thickly over the spot. That wall could *never* have supported a dwelling : the *habitants* never resided on that part of the Island : it must therefore have formed part of the *Fort des Hurons*.

The mission established at this spot in 1659, was under the charge of the Reverend Fathers Ragueneau and Garreau, who with a few servants, resided in their humble cottage among the wigwams, and ministered not only to the spiritual but also to the temporal wants of the Indians. When these poor exiles fled from their own country to seek a home near the fort

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\* Vide also Relations des Jésuits, Vol. 2, year 1652, page 10.

of Stadacona, the Father Jesuits did not hesitate to deprive themselves of every little comfort in order to minister to the wants of the fugitives. The Revd. Father Ragueneau, writing to his Superior in 1651, says :—" We had to feed these people during the first " year entirely at our own expense, which cost us " over eight hundred francs. (*livres*,) giving with " pleasure all that we had and all that had been sent " to us from France : but it is a charity well employed " since its only aim is the salvation of souls."

In reading the *Relations des pères Jésuits*, (writings which were never intended for the public eye and are therefore worthy of the fullest credit) one is struck with the simple style and beauty no less than the fervent piety of these narratives.

It chills the very blood to read of the fearful tortures and sufferings which the first Christian Missionaries underwent at the hands of the Iroquois and other Indian tribes. All honor to the noble men who for the sake of the Gospel cheerfully suffered death in many instances, and in others mutilations and tortures far worse than death, and marked by a refinement of cruelty too horrible to conceive.

This colony of Huron Christians found themselves so happy in their new home, that they called it the " Island of the Holy Mary, " in gratitude to her who was the patroness of their Church and mission. Foremost for piety amongst the Hurons was Joseph

Taondechoren, of whom many fine traits are told by Father Ragueneau :—This zealous Christian, with five others of the same tribe and creed and also several children were lost on a journey to Tadoussac on the 26th June 1652 when their canoe was caught by a sudden squall in mid-river and swamped. The loss of this good man and his companions was very severely felt not only by the young colony but by the Jesuit Fathers themselves.

In the account of the Huron Colony on the Isle of Orleans, written by père Le Mercier in 1654, he gives a most touching picture of the Indians in that locality, which seems almost to realize one's conception of the Golden age. He says :—" Devotion and faith reign " in the little fort : besides the private devotions " which each one offers up morning and evening in " his cabane, they all assist at the public prayers in " the Church : scarcely can one distinguish working " days from Sundays and Fêtes ; their modesty and " devotion, would make many a Frenchman blush. " Their beauty of voice is rare, especially among the " girls. We have written several hymns for them in " their own language, which they sing with marvel- " lous sweetness (*elles les chantent à ravir.*) It is " a holy consolation, in which there is nothing bar- " barous, to hear the woods and fields resound so " melodiously with the praises of God, in the midst " of a country but lately called heathen."



That the Indians were not ungrateful for the kindness shown them may be gathered from the following anecdote. At the time of the destruction by fire of the first Ursuline Convent in December 1650, the Huron Christians, assembled of their own accord for the purpose of condoling with the Nuns in their misfortune and offering them a gift to assuage their grief, as was customary among the Indians on such occasions : their only riches were two bead collars, and with these they presented themselves at the Hospital where the Ursulines had found a temporary home. Their chief, Louis Taiaeronk, delivered on this occasion one of those touching addresses for which the North American Indians used to be justly celebrated. He spoke somewhat in these terms : “ You see before you, holy ladies, a few poor skeletons, the remnants of a country once flourishing, but which no longer exists : in the country of the Hurons we were devoured and gnawed to the very bones, by war and famine : these skeletons only live because you sustain them : you have heard by letters and now you can see for yourselves to what a depth of misery we have arrived. Regard us on every side, and see if there be any thing that should prevent us from continually lamenting and shedding torrents of tears. Alas ! this dreadful accident which has befallen *you* only increases our calamities the more, and renews the tears which were beginning to dry

“ up. In seeing that noble house of God reduced to  
“ ashes in a moment, on beholding the fire rage in  
“ that house of charity without even respecting your  
“ own holy persons, we were strongly reminded of  
“ the universal destruction of all our houses, of all  
“ our villages, of our entire country. Must fire  
“ then follow us everywhere? Holy ladies, we see  
“ you reduced to the same state of misery as  
“ your poor Hurons, to whom you have shown such  
“ tender compassion: We behold you without a  
“ home, without provisions, without succour save it  
“ be from Heaven, which in truth will never lose  
“ sight of you. We entered here with a view to con-  
“ sole you, but before coming we had already looked  
“ into your hearts to discover what afflicted them  
“ most since the conflagration of your Convent, in  
“ order that we might bring some remedy. If we  
“ were addressing natives like ourselves, the custom  
“ of the country would have been to make you one  
“ present to stop your tears, and a second to strength-  
“ en your courage, but we saw distinctly that your  
“ courage never failed for a moment during the des-  
“ truction of your home, and that not a tear was shed  
“ by any of you, even at the sight of so great a misfor-  
“ tune. Your hearts are not saddened at the loss of  
“ the good things of this earth, they are too surely  
“ set upon Heavenly desires, and therefore on that  
“ score we need offer no consolation. We fear but

“ one thing which would be a great misfortune for  
“ us : we fear that the news of your misfortune being  
“ carried to France should be felt by your relatives  
“ more deeply than by ourselves : we fear lest  
“ that they recall you to themselves, and that you be  
“ induced to go. Can a mother read without tears  
“ the intelligence that her daughter has been bereft  
“ of food and raiment, and all those little comforts  
“ of life, to which you have been accustomed since  
“ your early youth ? Will not the first impulse of  
“ these desolate mothers be to recall you to them-  
“ selves, and in procuring your happiness to expe-  
“ rience themselves the greatest of earthly bliss ?  
“ A brother would do the same for his sister, an  
“ uncle or aunt for his niece, and thus we are in dan-  
“ ger of losing *you*, and in your persons the aid we  
“ had fondly anticipated for the instruction of our  
“ daughters in that Faith whose precious fruits we had  
“ already begun to taste. Courage, holy ladies, do  
“ not be overcome by the love of your parents, but  
“ show to day that the charity you have for us is  
“ stronger than any natural ties. To strengthen your  
“ resolutions in this, here is a present of 1200 beads  
“ of porcelain to establish the foundations of a new  
“ building, where will also be a house of prayer, and  
“ where you will again hold those classes for the in-  
“ struction of our little Huron girls. These are our  
“ desires, we feel that they are yours also, for doubt-



“less you would not die happy if in dying we could make you this reproach, that a too-tender love of your relatives should have made you neglect the salvation of so many souls who love you for Jesus’ sake, and who will be your Crown in Heaven.”

Such was the speech of the Huron Chief: I add nothing to it, says Father Ragueneau, nay more, the tone of his voice and noble bearing lent to it a grace which no words of mine could express. Nature has indeed its eloquence, and though these people are but simple barbarians, they are not devoid of manly bearing, of reason, and of a soul of the same extraction as ours

But alas ! for human happiness :—how short lived is it ? The Iroquois who still cherished in their bosoms the greatest hatred to the Hurons, hearing of their happy retreat on the Isle of Orleans, determined on a descent. On the night of the 19th May 1656, these cruel savages, under cover of a night of unusual darkness, passed noiselessly in their canoes before the City of Quebec, without being perceived, and landed before the dawn of day in a large Cove called “*la Grande anse*,” a little below the Huron village. Hiding their canoes among the bushes they spread themselves through the woods surrounding the clearances of the Hurons, who were engaged at that season in sowing Indian corn, and there awaited the approach of their victims. On the morning of the



20th May, after attending mass, as was their wont, a large party of the Hurons went to the fields to their daily labour. Immediately the Iroquois rushed on their defenceless victims, massacred a number on the spot, and carried away many others captive to suffer a more cruel death : the remnant fled to the Missionary's house within the Fort, well defended against such attacks, and were saved. Nevertheless the Hurons lost on this occasion 71 men, with a large number of young women, the flower of the Colony. Having done all the mischief they could, the Iroquois retired about mid-day : they had about 40 canoes, which soon appeared with their human cargoes on the bosom of the broad river, returning on the same track they had taken in their descent the night previous. Who can picture the dismay of the good Missionaries and the few Hurons who had escaped the massacre, when they saw these 40 canoes bearing from their lovely isle almost all that remained dear to them on earth ? After this unfortunate affair the remnant of the colony, with their pastors, abandoned the Island, and settled firstly at St. Foye, and lastly at Lorette, where their descendants are still to be found, few in number and greatly degenerated.

But the interest attaching to *la " Terre du Fort "* does not cease here ; on the front of this property is a large cove called "*Anse du Fort*," peculiarly suitable for ship-building and which has acquired

no little celebrity in the history of Canada.

In this Cove were constructed so far back as the years 1824 and 1825, two immense vessels, which at that period were deemed wonders in the ship-building art, and which have not been surpassed in their size and tonnage until within the last few years. The "Columbus" launched on the 28th July, 1824, was 300 feet long, 50 feet breadth of beam, 30 feet depth of hold, and admeasured 3690 tons, enabling her to carry about 6000 tons of cargo. The "Baron Renfrew," launched on the 25th June, 1825, was 309 feet long, 60 feet breadth of beam, 38 feet depth of hold, and admeasured 5888 tons, enabling her to carry nearly 10,000 tons of timber, with a draft of 24 feet of water. These huge vessels were constructed by a Mr. Wood of Glasgow, for a Scotch Company, but their success was not such as to induce the Company to build any more of the same class. The launch of the Columbus created quite a sensation in Quebec, and attracted a large number of persons not only from the city, but from the surrounding country. The account of this launch, as given in the Quebec Mercury of the 31st July, 1824, I shall borrow entire :

"The long expected launch of the great ship took place on Wednesday morning last, at the point of the Island of Orleans, in presence of a large concourse of people, assembled to witness an event which forms as important an epoch in the history of naval

“ architecture, as it does in the annals of this Province. The St. Lawrence, which but a few years ago, comparatively speaking, had borne on its wave only the rudely constructed canoe of the native Indian, has now floating on its waters the largest ship in existence, or of the building of which for navigable purposes we have any authentic record. This immense vessel, has with great propriety been named *The Columbus*.

“ Her dimensions are as follows, length 300 feet, breadth of beam 50 feet, and depth of hold 30 feet, her model is also as extraordinary as her dimensions, being precisely that of a Canadian bateau, that is perfectly flat bottomed and wall sided, the stern and stern post nearly or altogether perpendicular, and both ends sharp alike, without any fulness, as is the case in the bows and sterns of ships of the usual construction, so that her floor may be compared to a parallelogram with an acute equicrural triangle at either extremity. Her tonnage by register is 3,690 tons, but she is thought to be capable of carrying at least 6,000 tons freight, her stowage is somewhat embarrassed by the massy beams which connect her side timbers, or she would probably freight 7,000 tons.

“ This ship has been an object of general curiosity since she was first laid down ; her dimensions so far exceeding any which have yet been attempted

“ in the largest ships of war, that even a faithful report of the bulk was received with suspicion, and a number of vague stories were set afloat as to the intention of the builders in framing this wonderful craft ; it was imagined by many, that a solid mass of timber was to be built in something like the shape of a vessel, and covered with an outward sheathing of planks sufficiently strong to render her capable of traversing the ocean at a favorable season when good weather might be expected. But as the work advanced, it became evident from the regular plan pursued, and the solid manner in which her massy frame was connected, that something more was intended than a mere ship-shaped raft ; she is now a complete vessel, and it is expected will prove sufficiently manageable, but will not probably perform more than one voyage. Every precaution has however been taken for the safety and comfort of those who are to navigate her. Her cabin and a safety room being prepared, that should the vessel by any means become water-logged, the crew would endure but little inconvenience. Many persons entertained doubts of the possibility of launching this stupendous fabric, and there were not wanting those who affirmed that she would never float, but remain on the blocks where she was built, a monument of the presumptuous folly of the projectors.

“ The events of Wednesday proved how much the



“ wonderers and doubters had been mistaken, and  
“ shewed how ably the work had been conducted,  
“ and how minutely and justly the builder had made  
“ his calculations. At half-past or thirty-five minutes  
“ past seven, this ponderous mass was put in motion,  
“ with as much facility as any smaller vessel, and  
“ slid majestically into the St. Lawrence. The  
“ length of the ways was somewhat less than 600  
“ feet, and precisely one minute elapsed between  
“ the period when she moved, and that of her reach-  
“ ing the water, her entrance into which was greeted  
“ by appropriate airs from the military bands in at-  
“ tendance, and repeated salutes from the guns of the  
“ steam-boats, and some which had been planted on  
“ the shore for that purpose Her ways were much  
“ scorched by the friction of her motion, and so great  
“ a smoke arose, that distant spectators imagined  
“ some accident to have taken place. From her  
“ peculiar construction in the wedge-like form of  
“ her stern, and the small proportion her breadth  
“ bears to her length, she created but little swell,  
“ even the smallest boats were hardly tossed, and no  
“ sensible motion was experienced on board the  
“ steamboats and larger vessels.

“ Three of her four masts were standing, that is  
“ the first and second main-masts, and her trysail  
“ mast; the sheers were also up for stepping the fore-  
“ mast, and her bowsprit was in; the whole of these  
“ appear so small when compared with the bulk of

“ the hull, that they look like jury spars, her main-sail is not larger than that of a small 74. As soon as she lost way she was taken in tow by the steam-boats Swiftsure, Lady Sherbrooke and Malsham, and conducted to the Montmorenci Channel, where she dropped her anchor, which did not appear to us larger than we have seen on board a first rate ship of war. The weight is 18 cwt. 2 qrs.

“ The day was remarkably fine and the river presented an animated spectacle, no less than seven steam-boats, and an amazing number of rowing and sailing-boats being upon the water. Those who contented themselves with a view from the works of the town or Cape Diamond, though they had but a distant sight of the launch, had the pleasure of enjoying the moving scene upon the St. Lawrence, as in a panorama.

“ The effect of the military bands upon the water was very fine : the Swiftsure, which after the business of the launch was over, made the tour of the Island of Orleans, had on board the band and bugles of the 71st Regiment : the 68th band enlivened the Lady Sherbrooke, whilst the admirers of the pibroch were gratified by the pipers of the former regiment, who were on board the Laprairie in full national costume. Amongst the company in the different boats we saw some strangers from the United States, and several gentlemen from Montreal : what greatly enhances the pleasure afforded by the memorable occasion is, that we have not heard of any, even the most trivial accident occurring.”

On the 18th of June, of the following year, an attempt was made to launch the “ Baron of Renfrew,” but to the great disappointment of the assembled

crowd, it proved a failure. After being set in motion and gliding slowly about half her own length, the cradle broke down and she settled on the ways, owing doubtless to her having a cargo of 4000 tons of timber on board at the time ; however, she was afterwards successfully launched on the 25th of the same month.

So much for the historical recollections of the Island.

To turn to more practical objects, it abounds in lime stone of a very pure description, excellent for building purposes, or for the manufacture of lime, and on the beaches on the north side there exists clay for the manufacture of bricks in inexhaustible quantities. After the great fires of 1845, a brick factory was here established and worked successfully for a time by the Committee for the relief of the sufferers ; but expensive management, and *too many cooks*, caused the establishment at length to be abandoned. With a large city in the neighborhood, and peculiar facilities for transport, there is no reason why bricks and pottery of all descriptions should not be profitably manufactured on the Island.

Its agricultural capabilities are too well known to need any particular description ; but I must call attention to the number and beauty of its wild flowers, of which there is a constant succession throughout the summer. The great body of water which surrounds the Island keeps the temperature more even than about Quebec : the first autumnal frosts that destroy



the tender plants in the neighborhood of the town are scarcely felt at Orleans, and dahlias, heliotropes, and other sensitive plants, remain in bloom there for several weeks longer than on the main land.

The luxuriant growth of the wild vine leads one to suppose that the wine producing grape might here be profitably grown, and the Island thus become in very deed, as in name, a Canadian "Isle of Bacchus."

The salubrity of the climate is also remarkable ; during the years 1832 and 1834, when the cholera decimated the whole of the surrounding country, there was not a case at Orleans : the air is clear and bracing with cool breezes from the River, and invalids coming to the Island for change of air seem to gain new life and strength as if by magic.

How it happens that this Island, with its great natural advantages, proximity to the city, and superior climate, is so little known to the citizens of Quebec, even at the present day, is a mystery to me. The Governors and *notables*, in the time of the French, used to make it their summer retreat, and gladly avail themselves of its cool breezes and delightful walks.

A commencement has been made by the erection of several villas, and the establishment of a regular Steam Ferry to the city, and I believe that the time is not far distant when the Isle of Orleans, like Staten Island in the Bay of New York, will vie with the surrounding districts in the number and beauty of its country seats.









